



June 14, 2023

Spencer Cox
Governor of Utah
State Capitol
Salt Lake City, Utah

Annual Report of the Utah Board of Higher Education, 2022-2023

Governor:

The 17 Utah Board of Higher Education members who served from July 2022 to June 30, 2023, submit this report on the Board's work benefitting Utah students. We are proud of our record of effectiveness and governance. We appreciate the support we received from the institutions, the Commissioner's office, and various stakeholders. State law and USHE policy requires the Board to perform an annual self-evaluation, and this report serves that purpose as well. The Board's high level of engagement resulted in substantial progress in all areas of its July 2020 Utah Higher Education Strategic Plan adopted by the state Legislature. We met every month, either as committees or as a full Board, and focused sharply on the state's strategic plan goals as follows:

Access to Higher Education:

- Began design and implementation of a common application for all 16 institutions, which simplifies the process for Utah families.
- Added more student mental health resources statewide using the JED grant and other innovative approaches.
- Challenged the presidents to undertake a statewide online initiative to provide students with more consistent, flexible offerings in both rural and urban areas.
- Addressed opportunity gaps to ensure that all Utah students have access to higher education, including in the high schools.
- Expanded the Utah College Advising Corps to almost every school district statewide.

Affordability of Higher Education:

- Held tuition and fees steady for students per the Fiscal Year 2024 freeze and designed a more robust system for scrutinizing tuition increases in future years.
- Began implementation of shared services across the System.
- Enforced the non-dedicated building request process set by the Legislature that allows only one new technical college building and one degree-granting college building each year.
- Allocated additional scholarship resources to students in need.
- Oversaw the \$19-billion-plus assets on deposit with the Utah my529 program serving students and families saving for education.
- Completed the reorganization of the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority to establish a multi-million-dollar student endowment that will benefit Utah families for years to come.

Completion of Higher Education Within Six Years of Entry:

- Instituted a data dashboard where institutions' completion data could be compared and monitored for improvement.
- Supported completion initiatives such as the Math Competency Initiative allowing students to complete math requirements in high school and focusing more resources on first-year course success.
- Aligned technical college programs among the institutions so courses are consistent across the state and students can complete efficiently even if transferring institutions.
- Converted technical college programs from clock hour to credit hour to create a common currency for students moving efficiently from technical to degree-granting institutions.
- Used the transfer council to provide meaningful pathways for students to change institutions without losing credit.
- Allowed credit for prior learning by students who have skills from work and/or military training.

Workforce Alignment:

- Expanded the Custom Fit opportunities at Utah's eight technical colleges for nearly 2,000 Utah companies to train thousands of employees for specific jobs in industry.
- Partnered with Talent Ready Utah to award \$873,090 in funding to institutions working with manufacturing and transportation industries.
- Supported a new high school apprenticeship program led by Talent Ready Utah for employers to pay students in work-based learning opportunities.
- Operationalized the Utah Adopt-A-School platform through Talent Ready Utah to connect businesses with students.

System Governance:

- Adopted new Performance Funding goals incentivizing institutions to show results in improved access, completion, and high-wage/high-yield jobs.
- Revamped the presidential evaluation process to provide objective performance reviews and also professional development resources for presidents.
- Selected four new presidents: Southern Utah University, Dixie Technical College, Snow College, and Utah State University.
- Passed a Freedom of Expression resolution supporting institutions as they foster a culture that encourages respectful discussion of viewpoints with civility.
- Refined state policy on Roles and Missions of Utah's colleges and universities to use taxpayer resources wisely and avoid System duplication.
- Strengthened the approval of new programs, especially out-of-mission doctorates for regional universities.
- Invested in institutional Board of Trustees training and met with trustees at least monthly to work collaboratively with them in System governance.
- Added a Research pillar to the statewide strategic plan to support the two R-1 research universities.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as unpaid community leaders in this critically important task affecting Utah's future. We encourage the new Board and state leaders to continue this progress using the statewide strategic plan.



Lisa-Michele Church, Chair

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